

~~SECRET~~

The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

NIC #02938-88

19 August 1988

National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Fritz W. Ermarth
Chairman

SUBJECT: Big Pictures in Small Frames

Following our conversation about your impending briefing of Governor Dukakis, I asked the NIOs each to give me a "one liner" from his area, what he would want to say if he had the chance to speak but one sentence to the candidate.

The attached is my own effort to synthesize what the NIOs gave me, reflecting some implicit differences (e.g., on how much Gorbachev is likely to seek constraints on military competition) and forcing my own opinion in some cases (e.g., narcotraffic interdiction will not work). Although these words are solely my responsibility, I think they reflect the state of NIC thinking on some big issues.

I hope these points prove useful.

Fritz W. Ermarth
Fritz W. Ermarth

Attachment:
As stated



~~SECRET~~

L-259-IR

Dukakis

SECRET

25X1

19 August 1988

Perspectives from the National Intelligence Council

USSR

Under Gorbachev the USSR is trying to appear less threatening to the West and is expected by many (not all) in the Intelligence Community to seek substantial relaxation of arms competition and regional conflicts, to promote both foreign policy goals and domestic economic revival. For now at least, the modernization of strategic and general purpose military forces continues as in the past. Resource concentration and foreign infusions should keep Soviet military technology competitive in the years ahead. All agree that Gorbachev will present a much more formidable political challenge to the West, and the Soviet espionage threat shows no sign of subsiding.

EUROPE

Some redefinition of the security relationship between the US and Europe is going to come about in the next decade; that redefinition must either be led constructively by the United States or it will "happen" on its own, perhaps not so constructively. One can say approximately the same thing about the Soviet-East European relationship, where destructive prospects for the region, for Moscow, and for East-West relations are even richer.

EAST ASIA

Sino-Soviet rapprochement, the growth (slowly) of Japanese assertiveness, and the retrenchment of US power purported to be sensed by the countries of the region are creating a new political climate which may make East Asia a less predictable and congenial area for the US in the 1990s than it has been in the 1980s.

NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

Soviet withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, the death of Zia, the prospect of an end to the Iran-Iraq war, developments surrounding the Palestinian uprising, more enterprising Soviet diplomacy, and the proliferation of sophisticated weaponry have made the whole region one of more volatile challenge to the US than even a few months ago. Some developments have been sought by the US, but the net trends are toward instabilities and conflicts hostile to US interests and more demanding of political and military engagement than we have the stomach for.

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

25X1

THIRD WORLD

Proliferation of sophisticated weapons, including nuclear potential, is a "megatrend".

The debt crisis threatens otherwise promising movement of Third World countries toward open political and economic life, particularly in Latin America.

Notably in Africa, AIDS threatens to wipe out entire elite and urban populations on which development progress depends.

Interdiction and eradication efforts are not going to materially stem the tide of narcotics into the US from Third World countries, especially in Latin America. Rather, until the US curbs its domestic demand, trafficking will threaten the stability and civility of a number of supplying countries, and US interdiction/eradication policies will seriously trouble our relations with them.

SECRET

25X1